

March 2015 Monthly Report for MTC

To: Steve Heminger, Executive Director
From: Tom Bulger, President, GRI
Re: Monthly Report for March 2015
Date: March 30, 2015

- **March Washington, D.C. Meetings**
- **California Transportation Congressional Reception**
- **California's Connected Vehicle Pilot Deployment Proposal**
- **Senate and House Approve Budget Resolutions**
- **Short-Term Highway Trust Fund Extension**
- **Freight Infrastructure Bill Introduced**
- **House Transportation & Infrastructure Hearing on the State and Local Perspective**
- **Administration Unveils New Six-Year Surface Transportation Reauthorization Bill**
- **Meetings**

March Washington, D.C. Meetings

In mid-March, MTC Commissioners and senior staff were in Washington, D.C. For this year's visit, we arranged the following meetings:

- Senator Dianne Feinstein
- Congresswoman Zoe Lofgren
- Congresswoman Anna Eshoo
- Congressman Jerry McNerney
- Congressman Jared Huffman
- Congresswoman Barbara Lee
- Congressman Mike Thompson
- Congressman Mark DeSaulnier
- Congressman John Garamendi
- Congressman Eric Swalwell
- Congresswoman Jackie Speier
- Congressman Earl Blumenauer
- Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi (Staff)
- Congressman Sam Graves (Staff)
- Federal Transit Administration Acting Administrator Therese McMillan
- House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee Majority Senior Staff
- House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee Minority Senior Staff
- Senate Environment & Public Works Committee Majority Senior Staff
- Senate Banking Committee Majority Senior Staff
- Senate Banking Committee Minority Senior Staff
- Transportation for America
- Coalition for America's Gateways and Trade Corridors
- U.S. Chamber of Commerce
- American Public Transit Association
- Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) Chair, Dave Cortese, led a delegation to a meeting at the White House with the President's Economic and Intergovernmental Staff.
- Steve Heminger led a delegation to the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) Secretary's Policy staff.

California Transportation Congressional Reception

In a departure from previous years, the Annual California Transportation Congressional Reception was held on March 17, St. Patrick's Day. MTC along with LA Metro, Orange County Transportation Authority, METROLINK, Southern California Association of Governments, San Bernardino Associated Governments, Riverside County Transportation Commission, Bay Area Council, Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce, Mobility 21, Port of Oakland, Port of Long Beach, California Transit Association, Ventura County Transportation Commission and Alameda Corridor Transportation Authority sponsored the reception.

Chair Bill Shuster (R-Pa.), of the House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee, attended the reception and delivered welcoming remarks. Numerous Members of Congress and members of the Obama Administration also attended.

Overall reception attendance was exceptionally high.

California's Connected Vehicle Pilot Deployment Proposal

In March, MTC staff requested assistance in securing a Congressional Delegation support letter to US DOT Secretary Anthony Foxx for the "One California" proposal. Emily Burns, Rep. John Garamendi's staff, took the task of rounding up the majority of the Delegation for a March 26 support letter.

Senate and House Approve Budget Resolutions

At the end of March, the Senate and the House voted to approve their version of the FY 2016 Budget Resolutions separately. Both Resolutions include reductions in transportation discretionary spending, \$3 billion in the Senate and \$1 billion in the House. However, both Resolutions include a Reserve Fund, which could increase allocations to the Transportation Committees if the Highway Trust Fund is made solvent over the term of an authorization bill and if the authorization bill does not increase the deficit.

Short-Term Highway Trust Fund Extension

It looks highly probable that the Highway Trust Fund will need to be extended past May 31. House Ways and Means Committee Chair Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) on March 27 said that a short-term extension of the Highway Trust Fund would be necessary to make more time for the Committee to figure out tax reform.

Freight Infrastructure Bill Introduced

On March 4, Rep. Alan Lowenthal (D-Calif.) introduced H.R. 1308, Economy in Motion: The National Multimodal and Sustainable Freight Infrastructure Act. The legislation would establish a dedicated revenue source for rebuilding America's freight infrastructure. The bill would raise about \$8 billion a year for freight related projects nationwide. The bill would also establish a Freight Transportation Infrastructure Trust Fund with a national one percent waybill fee on the transport costs of goods. Two grant programs are envisioned: 1) a formula program that would give states annual funding on their amount of existing freight infrastructure; 2) a competitive grant program open to all local, regional and states.

MTC Chair Dave Cortese was supportive of the Rep. Lowenthal bill's introduction.

House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee Hearing on the State and Local Perspective

On March 17, we attended the House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee hearing on the State and Local Reauthorization perspectives. MTC Commissioners and staff also attended the hearing.

The main theme of the hearing was the notion of devolving the federal surface transportation program.

None of the witnesses supported the idea of devolving the federal transportation programs to the states.

The Governor of North Carolina, Pat McCrory and the Mayor of Salt Lake City, Utah Ralph Becker testified in opposition to devolution.

Administration Unveils New Six-Year Surface Transportation Reauthorization Bill

On March 30, the Obama Administration, through US DOT Secretary Foxx, announced a new \$478 billion six-year surface transportation reauthorization proposal. The proposal would be funded by current revenues from the Highway Trust Fund in combination with a 14 percent transition tax on the estimated \$2 trillion of untaxed foreign earnings that U.S. companies have parked overseas.

The Proposal includes:

- \$317 billion for the nation's highway system and road safety;
- \$115 billion for transit systems and expanded options;
- Enhanced MPO Authority and sub allocation of STP and TAP funds;
- \$18 billion for multi-modal freight;
- \$28.6 billion for high performance & passenger rail programs.

Meetings

I attended the following meetings, in addition to the MTC Washington, D.C. meetings held mid-March:

- American Public Transit Association evening session with White House staff about alternative transportation financing opportunities e.g. TIFIA, P3's etc;
- Intelligent Transportation Society of America (ITSA) luncheon with Rep. Earl Blumenauer (D-Ore.) on the Congressman's federal gas/diesel tax proposal;
- ITSA Legislative Committee meeting with Melanie Crotty of MTC staff.